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Columbia Construction completes MCLA's Center for Science & Innovation: Design for 67,000 s/f provided by Einhorn Yafee Prescott

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The Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) opened the doors to its newest building on campus, the new Center for Science & Innovation. This \$40 million facility is the first major construction project on the campus, literally in the last 40 years.

"This project marks a significant change to the higher education opportunities in this area of Massachusetts," said Bill Aalerud, project executive at Columbia Construction. "Not only will the building be used by students of MCLA, but certain areas will be accessible to outside groups allowing for a diversity in teaching partnerships and intellectual interaction and collaboration with the community."

Designed by Einhorn Yafee Prescott and constructed by Columbia Const., MCLA's new 67,000 s/f Center for Science & Innovation will house flexible teaching and research laboratories, and a mixture of office space. It also has a rooftop classroom and greenhouse, a three story atrium that accommodates up to 100 people, and informal learning spaces with a 72-seat tiered lecture hall. The new integrated facility will primarily be used by the chemistry, biology, environmental science, psychology and physics departments along with the college's Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Pipeline and Berkshire Environmental Resources Center (BERC).

To meet the needs of constructing such a prominent and important building on the MCLA campus, Columbia Const. worked collaboratively with the entire project team to make MCLA's vision for this building a reality. Special features include a terra cotta façade with metal paneling, along with a curtain wall system and punched windows. To match the neighboring Murdock Hall, the exterior has the same ochre yellow characteristics, blending both classic and contemporary architectural styles. Additionally, in an effort to extend the learning environment an outdoor teaching circle was also constructed.

The project is targeting a Silver rating within the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification system. A few green features include solar shading on curtain wall window system to reduce heat gain, a photovoltaic solar array system, and a vegetated green roof area. In addition, the project team used Building Information Modeling (BIM). Funded through the governor's 2008 Higher Education Bond Bill and supervised by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), this project represents an extraordinary investment in public higher education and the economic development of Berkshire County.

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